

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

EXCISE

54-W
Action
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE WASHINGTON

FROM: BEIRUT

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TO: Secretary of State

NO: 486, NOVEMBER 1, 6 PM

PRIORITY

POLICY

IT BEING NATIONAL HOLIDAY IN LEBANON, SAW FONMIN TAKLA AT HIS HOME AFTERNOON FIRST. HANDED HIM LENGTHY PERSONAL LETTER (TEXT BEING POUCHED) DRAFTED WITH VIEW TO MAKING CLEAR MY CONCERN THAT LEBANON WILL GET TARNISHED WORLD REPUTATION IF ONE LEB-FLAG SHIP AFTER ANOTHER IS FOUND BE TRAFFICKING IN SOVIET CARGOES TO CUBA. ALSO TOOK OCCASION TO SET FORTH IN PRECISE LANGUAGE POSSIBLE FUTURE APPLICATION TO LEBANON OF SECTION 107 OF FOREIGN AID APPROPRIATIONS ACT. HELPFUL DEPTEL 379 ARRIVED AFTER MY LETTER TYPED. ON SEPARATE PIECE OF PAPER HANDED TAKLA LIST OF ACTIONS TAKEN BY OTHER COUNTRIES, NOTABLY FLAG OF CONVENIENCE COUNTRIES PANAMA, LIBERIA AND HONDURAS.

TAKLA INDICATED FULL AWARENESS OF UNPLEASANT PROSPECTS FOR LEBANON ON SHIPPING PROBLEM BUT INSISTED GOL HAS NO MEANS OF CONTROLLING OR EVEN CONTACTING ITS NEARLY 200 FLAG VESSELS. HE NOTED GOL LEGISLATION HAD UNWISELY BEEN PASSED SEVEN YEARS AGO AND ALL GOL LEADERS RECENTLY SURPRISED TO FIND SO MANY REGISTRATIONS IN EFFECT. HE SAID HE WOULD BE OPEN TO ANY SUGGESTIONS DEPT. MIGHT HAVE.

STRESSING MY CONVICTION THAT DIFFICULTY IS NOT SO MUCH CESSION OF RESIDUAL USG AID BUT OF LEB'S INTER-NATIONAL REPUTATION, I NOTED THAT PANAMA, LIBERIA AND HONDURAS HAD FOUND IT POSSIBLE TO MAKE PUBLIC PROCLAMATIONS. TAKLA SAID THIS WOULD POSE HOT POLITICAL PROBLEM FOR LEBANON

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HERE AND IN MIDEAST AS IT WOULD APPEAR GOL KNUCKLING UNDER
TO USG PRESSURE. SPENCER DAVIS' AP STORY WHICH HAD BEEN
FRONT PAGED IN LEB PAPERS PREVIOUS DAY HAD MADE TASK OF
LEBANON'S COOPERATION IN MOVES TO CURB CUBAN SHIPPING MUCH
MORE DIFFICULT. HE WAS GRATEFUL FOR DEPT'S SUBSEQUENT
STATEMENT WHICH HAD AT LEAST FOR MOMENT QUELLED PUBLIC
CRITICISMS OF USG "THREATS".

AFTER FURTHER PRODDING, TAKLA GAVE THOUGHT TO OTHER
POSSIBILITIES. HE NOTED THAT HE AND PRESIDENT CHEHAB
HAD PREVIOUS DAY TAKEN DECISION TO INFORM LEB DIPLOMATIC
AND CONSULAR MISSIONS TO HALT ISSUING NEW REGISTRATIONS
(EMBTTEL 481). THIS HAS BEEN DONE.

b/a/s

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-3- 486, NOVEMBER 1, 6 PM, FROM BEIRUT

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COMMENT. IF TAKLA'S THREE-POINT PROGRAM (TWO NEW STEPS PLUS ONE TAKEN PREVIOUS DAY) COMMENDS ITSELF TO DEPT, WE MIGHT GIVE IT AN ASSIST BY GETTING SPOT LOCATIONS OF LEB-FLAG VESSELS (THIS CAN PROBABLY BE DONE THROUGH BEIRUT SOURCES) SO THAT SKIPPERS CAN BE CALLED IN WHEN THEY CALL AT PORTS WHERE LEB CONSULAR OFFICERS ARE LOCATED. MEANWHILE, IF LEB-FLAG VESSEL HAPPENS ENTER CUBA QUARANTINE AREA, EMBASSY WOULD HOPE WASHINGTON COULD TAKE GENERAL POSITION THAT APPLICATION OF SECTION 107 TO LEBANON NOT FEASIBLE BECAUSE IN EFFECT NO SPT NO FY 63 AID COMMITMENTS BEEN UNDERTAKEN.

MEYER

MRJ

NOTE: Advance copy Mr. Nyerger (NEA) S/S-O 550 PM 11-1-CWO-W

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